

Adaptive Management in the Northwest Forest Plan:

The Rhetoric and the Reality

George H. Stankey

USDA Forest Service

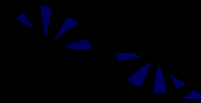
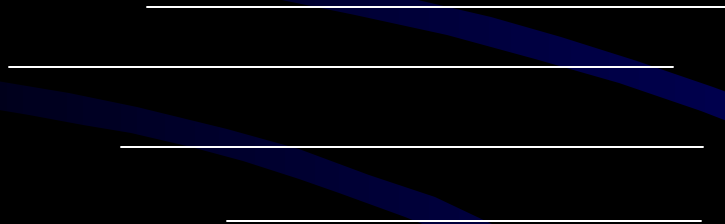
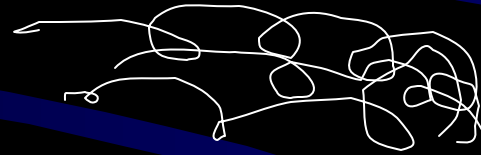
Pacific Northwest Research Station

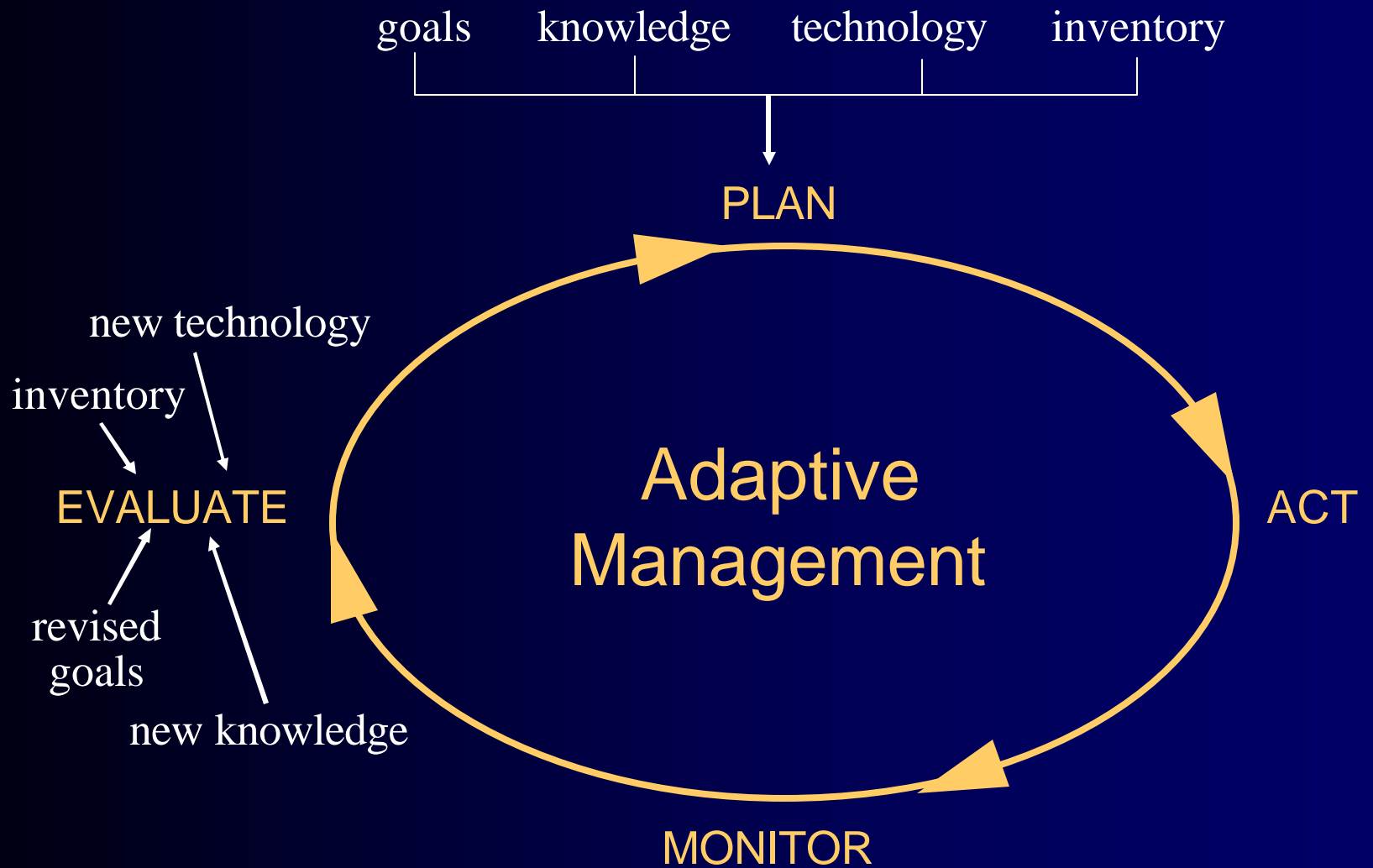
Corvallis, Oregon

Two-Pronged Strategy for NWFP

- In the short term, precautionary-based approach (anticipatory strategy)
 - Reserve allocations
 - Standards and Guidelines
- In the longer term, learning-based approach (resilience-building strategy)
 - Allocations and Standards and Guidelines subject to modification based on learning

In the transition from short- to long-term,
Adaptive Management is the “Engine”...





Adaptive Management: What is it?

“Management policies are experiments: learn from them.”
— Lee 1993

“Adaptive management views policies...really...as questions masquerading as answers.”
— Gunderson 1999

Adaptive Management: Expectations vs. Realizations

Adaptive management literature, drawn from a variety of sectors and differing biophysical and socio-political settings, reports disappointing outcomes.

“Adaptive management (is) another area where initial expectations have fallen short...”

— Pipkin 1998

Adaptive Management in the NWFP

- Comprehensive literature review
- Review of organizational plans, guides, studies
- In-depth interviews

Objectives

1. Evaluate progress in implementing Adaptive Management in the Plan
2. Identify factors that facilitate or constrain Adaptive Management
3. Identify options for enhancing adaptive approaches

Results:

Lack of a Common Definition

“In the case of the Plan, adaptive management has become a buzzword, a fashionable label that means less than it seems to promise.”

Results:

Learning to Learn

“Contrary to popular belief, most people under most circumstances are not all that eager to learn.”

“Just knowing is not enough.”

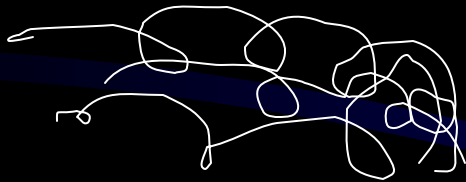
Results:

Incentives, Resources, and Time

“We’re expected to do more and more with less and less. Pretty soon, we’ll be asked to do everything with nothing.”

Results: Building and Sustaining Organizational Capacity

*“It isn’t the changes that do
you in, it’s the transitions.”*



OR



Results:

Organizational Leadership

*“Adaptive management isn’t on
the radar screen.”*

Results:

Managing Risk and Uncertainty

“Catch-22 is alive and well!”

Results:

Collaborative Links with Citizens

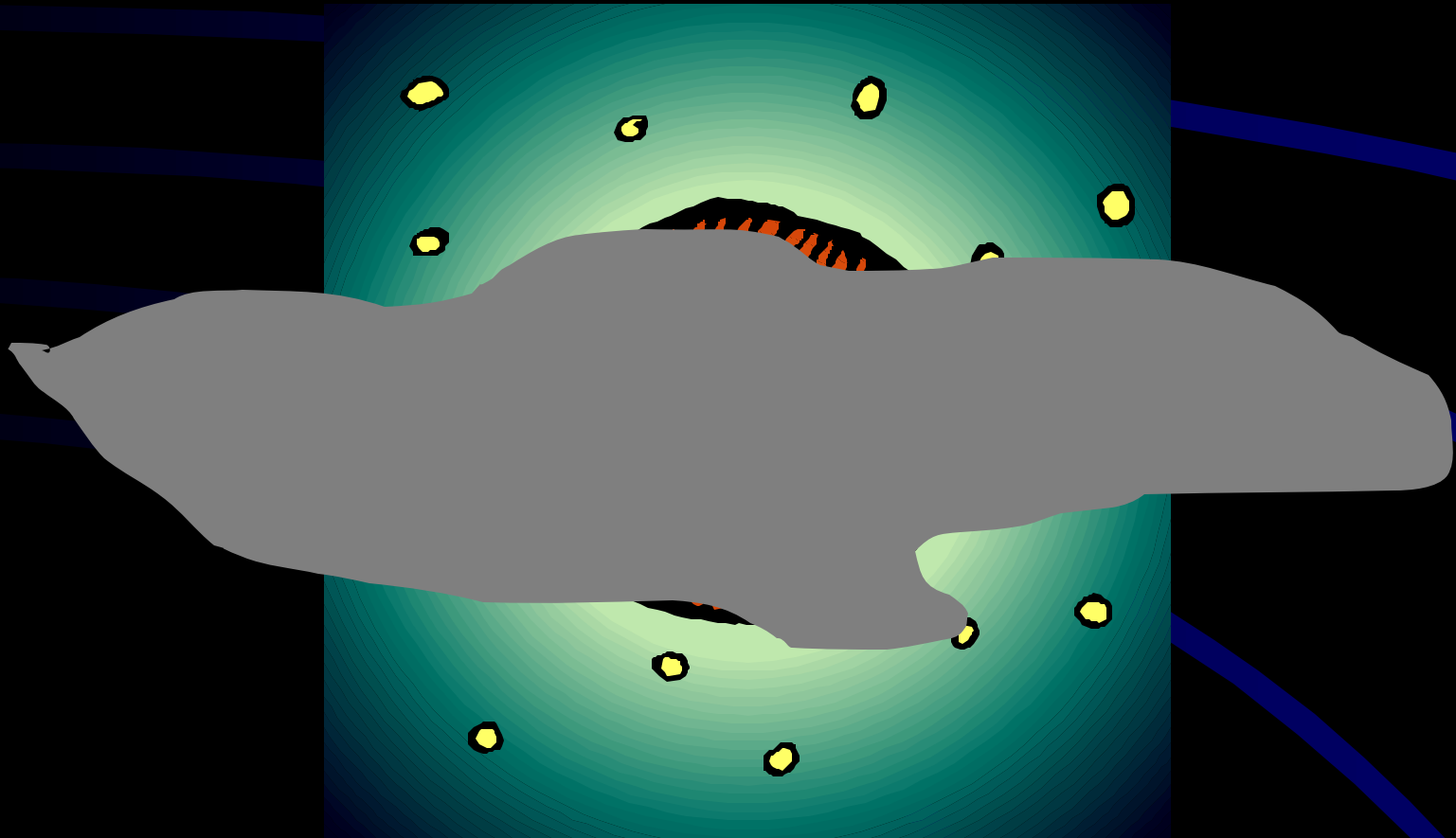
“Citizens saw little promise on their AMA to indicate that the public’s role is significant...”

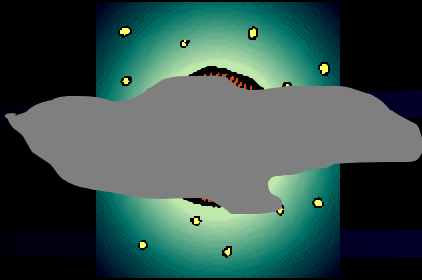
Results:

Organizational Culture, Power, and Influence

“Bureaucracies, generally less adaptive than other organizations, are resistant both to new information and to changes in culture.”

The Future?

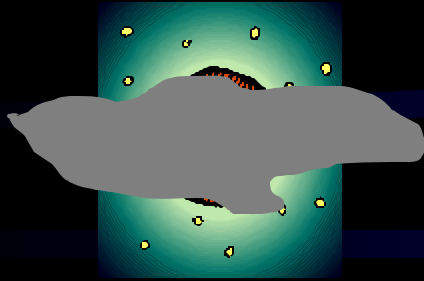




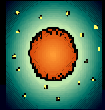
What's needed to make adaptive management a reality?

Potential great, performance lacking

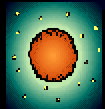
- No flexibility in social system
- Little or no resilience in key components of ecological system
- Technical challenge with designing experiments



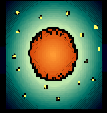
So what's needed to
move ahead?



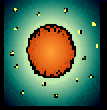
Working in a Collaborative,
Multi-party Environment



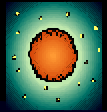
Linking Learning with Action



Documentation



Overcoming
Compartmentalization



Leadership

